

12/23/05

John Tolley, DOT/PF Planning Director  
PO Box 196900  
Anchorage, AK 99519-6900

Dear Mr. Tolley,

It is my understanding that the state has just recently dropped the Seward Highway improvement plan out of the STIP. I do not support dropping the four lane proposal out of the plan.

I am a life-long Alaskan, born and raised in Kenai. Growing up we made various trips to Anchorage for doctor appointments, shopping and sports trips. The road has improved since then, however, there is much work to be done. A four lane divided highway from Potter Marsh to Girdwood would alleviate some of the stress driving on the highway and would improve the quality of life for several thousand Alaskans who travel that highway on a regular basis.

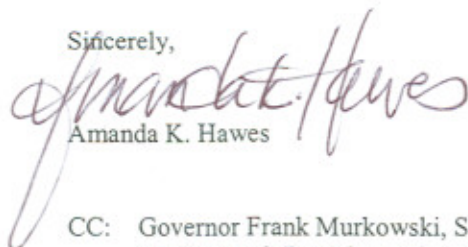
My husband and I now live and work in Girdwood, with our 16-month old son. Someday he will be high school age and we will either be forced to move to Anchorage, out of our community, or risk his life everyday for four years on the Seward Highway. We have lived in Girdwood for 2 ½ years and have already lost a friend and co-worker on the highway in a head-on accident. Diane Bahnson died on the curve just past the Indian Valley mine. Her accident was unavoidable, as a reckless driver came into her lane and hit her. I am fearful that someday Alaskans will be reading my, or a member of my family's, story in the Anchorage Daily News due to an unavoidable accident on that highway.

My hope would be that the state would consider the lives of the families in and around Girdwood, as well as the lives of those Alaskans on the Kenai Peninsula. The road is the only access point for tens of thousands of Alaskans to "the big city". As these communities grow and develop, we need to raise the standards of driving conditions to Anchorage. Often in the summer there are long lines of cars, trucks and RV's that create dangerous passing situations. In the fall and winter, darkness and dirty snow create treacherous driving conditions and often drivers cannot see the yellow and white lines, which divide the highway. A four lane divided highway is the only way to insure the safety of all drivers.

Divided highways are the standard in metropolitan areas as well as in smaller towns in the "lower 48". Anchorage is the largest city in Alaska that qualifies as an MSA, or Metropolitan Statistical Area. The state has a responsibility to consider the largest % of population when setting priorities regarding transportation planning. We ought to be planning for growth and our primary transportation corridors should be to the same, and certainly not inferior to, those standards set in the "lower 48".

Please reconsider a Four Lane Divided Seward Highway as a part of the STIP. Our lives and our quality of life depends on it.

Sincerely,

  
Amanda K. Hawes

CC: Governor Frank Murkowski, State Capital, Juneau, Alaska  
Mayor Mark Begich, Anchorage, Alaska  
Representative Mike Hawker, Anchorage, Alaska  
Senator Con Bunde, Anchorage, Alaska  
Jeff Otteson, DOT/PF, Deputy Commissioner, Juneau, Alaska  
Tracey Knutson, Chair, Girdwood Board of Supervisors  
Diana Livingston, Co-Chair, Girdwood 2020

